

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KABUL 04006 180459Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /070 W
-----009294 182115Z /46
R 170615Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8048
INFO USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4006

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, SCUL, SEDU, AF
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

1. TUESDAY MORNING, MAY 16, I CALLED ON NEW MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE, MOH. HASSAN BAREQ SHAFIEE. PAO ACCOMPANIED. NEW EDITOR OF MAJOR KABUL DAILY ANIS, RAHIM RAHFAT (FORMER MEMBER OF ANIS STAFF AND RECENT RETURNEE FROM SAHA WEST CENTER)

INTERPRETED. ALTHOUGH MILITARY MUCH IN EVIDENCE HERE AS ELSEWHERE IN MINISTERIAL OFFICES, FAMILIAR FACES GREETED US ON ENTRY TO BUILDING, INCLUDING SAME HEAD SECRETARIAT AS UNDER PREVIOUS MINISTER.

2. MINISTER SHAFIEE, WHO SPOKE ENTIRELY IN DARI, WAS FRIENDLY, IF FAIRLY FORMAL. MINISTER'S OFFICE HAS BEEN MUCH SPRUCED UP, WITH SOME PERIOD FURNISHINGS AND PICTURES; COMPARED TO MOST AFGHAN MINISTERIAL OFFICES THIS ONE BOASTS A CERTAIN TASTEFUL ELEGANCE.

3. SHAFIEE WAS NOT MUCH INCLINED TO EXPRUND ON HIS PERSONAL BACKGROUND BUT DID ALLOW AS HOW HE WAS A POET, MAINLY IN DARI BUT WITH SGA PUBLICATION IN PUSHTO AND THAT HE HAD BEEN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KABUL 04006 180459Z

HONORED BY RECOGNITION AS A MODERN RATHER THAN TRADITIONAL ARTIST. HIS FOREIGN TRAVEL HAS BEEN LIMITED TO ONE SHORT VISIT TO IRAN, WHERE HE SAW TEHRAN AND ISFAHAN.

4. I OUTLINED U.S. PROGRAM IN CULTURAL RELATIONS AND INFORMATUON IN AFGHANISTAN AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WE COULD CONTINUE TO WORK MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL MANNER AT AMERICAN CENTER, THROUGH AFAMEC,

AND IN PROVIDING MATERIAL FOR PRESS. I EMPHASIZED ICA INTEREST
IN FACILITATING TWO-WAY FLOW OF INFORMATION.

5. SHAFIEE RESPONDED THAT NEW GOVERNMENT WANTED TO INCREASE
CULTURAL CONTACTS AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

HE CRITICIZED PREVIOUS AFGHAN REGIMES FOR RESTRICTIVE POLICIES

THAT LIMITED AFGHAN ACCESS TO IDEAS FROM ABROAD AND PREVENTED
AMERICANS FROM KNOWING MORE ABOUT AFGHANISTAN, RESPONDING TO
COMMENT ABOUT PRESS RELATIONS, HE TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO CRITICIZE
SOME FOREIGN REPORTING ON EVENTS OF COUP AS INACCURATE. I
DESCRIBED BRIEFLY STATUS OF AMERICAN PRESS AND DEFENDED AMERICAN
PRESS FREEDOM AS FUNDAMENTAL MEANS OF ASSURING ESSENTIAL
INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC IN DEMOCRACY. I COMMENTED FURTHER
THAT I THOUGHT PRESIDENT TARAQI'S PRESS CONFERENCE WAS VERY WISE
MOVE AND HOPED THAT NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD ENDEAVOR KEEP CHANNELS TO
WORLD PRESS OPEN. THE MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGED FREE CHARACTER OF
AMERICAN PRESS BUT SAID THEY WOULD BE WATCHING PERFORMANCE OF
FOREIGN MEDIA; GOVERNMENT WAS VERY INTERESTED IN ASSURING THAT,
CONTRARY TO SITUATION UNDER PREVIOUS REGIME, AFGHAN PEOPLE HAD
FULL AND CORRECT INFORMATION. N.B. EMBASSY HAS HAD REPORTS THAT
PAGE ON POST-COUP DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN HAS BEEN TORN OUT
OF NEWSTAND COPIES OF MAY 15 ISSUE OF TIME.

6. WE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ICA COULD IN FUTURE PROVIDE FORUMS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KABUL 04006 180459Z

AND CHANNELS FOR EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION, AND THAT
THE PAO MIGHT CALL ON OTHER MINISTRY PRESS AND CULTURAL OFFICIALS
TO PURSUE THIS AIM. MINISTER AGREED TO VALUE OF THIS AND SUGGESTED
WORK THROUGH MR. RAHFAT.

7. ON TAKING LEAVE, I LEFT PAPER DESCRIBING ICA PROGRAMS
FOR INFORMATION OF MINISTER, WHO SAID HE WOULD EXAMINE IT WITH
INTEREST AND SEE WHETHER THEY HAD ANY IDEAS FOR ADDITIONAL
ACTIVITIES TO SUGGEST.

8. COMMENT: THIS MINISTRY SEEMS TO BE STARTING BACK TO WORK
FAIRLY EXPEDITIOUSLY. FIRST NEW APPOINTMENTS, APART FROM VERY
TOP POSITIONS, APPEAR TO BE DRAWN FROM PROFESSIONAL RANKS.
MINISTER SAID ALL THAT WE COULD HAVE HOPED FOR IN FAVOR OF
MAINTAINING CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL CONTACTS. ANY EXPECTATIONS
REGARDING POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT ON ICA PROGRAMS
THEREFORE REMAIN PURELY SPECULATIVE. WITH RESPECT TO STATE OF
MEDIA WITHIN AFGHANISTAN, THERE HAVE BEEN AS YET NO SIGNS
WHATEVER THAT PRESS, TV AND RADIO WILL FUNCTION AS OTHER THAN
GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED ORGANS OF PROPAGANDA AND, PERHAPS,
INSTRUCTION. MINISTER'S REMARKS ABOUT PREVIOUS REGIME AND
REPORTING IN THE WESTERN PRESS CONTAINED NO SURPRISES AND WERE

RESTRAINED. (AS REPORTED SEPTTEL, MFA OFFICIAL ALSO CRITICIZED
FOREGIN REPORTING AND INFORMED EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER THAT
OPERATIONS OF WESTERN PRESS IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE BEEN SUBJECT
OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO MINISTRY IN AFGHANISTAN IN RECENT DAYS.)
ICA OFFICERS WILL NOW BEGIN SERIES OF CALLS ON APPROPRIATE
MINISTRY, PRESS, AND CULTURAL INSTITUTION OFFICIALS, INCLUDING
NEW DEPUTY MINISTER JUST APPOINTED, TO SURVEY FURTHER THE LAY
OF THE LAND.
ELIOT

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KABUL04006
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780210-0270
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780550/aaaabqjy.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bc263e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2668932
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, SCUL, SEDU, AF, (ELIOT, THEODORE L JR), (SHAFIEE, HASSAN BAREQ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bc263e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014